

SOLITUDE: A TIME OF INTIMACY WITH GOD

To be a woman in tune means to be able to hear, that is, accurately discern God's voice and respond by saying YES to Him! Like the musical note "A", God's word is the authority by which all our actions will be judged. The purity of our actions is dependent on how accurately we hear God's voice and how well and positively we respond to it

How do we discern God's voice?

To be able to accurately respond, "YES", i.e. to be obedient, you need first of all to hear accurately. Hearing accurately is dependent on:

1. Distance
2. Lack of interfering noises
3. Intimacy

To really tune in to God requires intimacy with Him. Song of Solomon talks about the closeness and intimacy between Christ and His Bride, Church. Intimacy can only truly be developed in an atmosphere of solitude.

What is solitude?

- Detachment, Separateness, Withdrawal, aloneness
- "The state of one who is alone"
- Solitude involves separation and standing alone.

Examples

- Jacob – *Genesis 32:24*
- Jesus – *Luke 5:16; Matthew 14:23*

To be able to walk with God and get to the place where we are so in tune with Him, we need to develop an attitude of lonesomeness. We need to develop and love the place of solitude. Everyone who ever met God in the bible met Him when they withdrew, left the norm, familiar, and even mediocre. That is the only place you'll truly find God.

The Two Dimensions of Solitude:

- *Song of Solomon 2:8-14*
1. **Outward/Outer** – *Matthew 14:23; Luke 22:4*
 - This involves physical withdrawal, where you 'remove' yourself to another place.
 - It involves a complete change of location and position, physically and outwardly.
 - It requires you to separate yourself, from the crowd, family, friends, etc.
 - It is a pre-requisite for inner solitude

2. **Inward/Inner** – Psalm 4:4; 46:10; 131:2; Isaiah 32:17

- This involves your spirit, but requires a complete change in position mentally.
- You come to a place where you have inner stillness, even in the midst of outer chaos. We have an enormous amount of internal claims to your attention. There are thousands of thoughts and feelings that emerge from hidden areas of our minds, even in the time of prayer. Inner solitude is a state in which all these claims to our attention are put aside and our focus is solely on God.
- It is also a place of absolute trust and confidence in God, even when the situation around you seems hopeless and contrary to His word. It is a state of assurance and confidence regarding God's ability, strength, power, truth and character (including His love, mercy and goodness)
- A place of faith, hope and conviction. A state of reliance and dependence on God alone – *"On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand"*.
- It is a state in which your spirit is in constant communion with God. You may not necessarily in the physical be alone, you may even be in a packed stadium but it seems like you are alone with Him because His presence is so strong around you.
- It is not a one off experience, but something that develops out of relationship with Him.

JESUS

- *Luke 9:10, Luke 4:1, Mark 7:24, Matthew 17:1, 15:29, 14:23.*

Jesus set an example for us. The Son of God saw the need for spending time alone with His Father. It was an essential part of His life on earth. Even though the Holy Spirit had descended on Him in a dramatic manner, He still knew the value of time spent with His Father. Even though He was the Son of God, He was also the Son of Man. He knew His survival and victory on earth depended on that. Jesus needed to spend time daily in His Father's presence. He daily, needed to withdraw from the crowd to pray and listen.

- Jesus did not need the crowd. The crowd needed Him! You do not need the crowd. The crowd needs you!

What do we do in time of Solitude?

To become women in tune, we need to develop an intimate relationship with The Lord. The level of intimacy we have with Him determines how much in tune we are.

- The word intimacy means – acquaintance - "Knowledge of something [someone] based on personal exposure"
- The time of solitude is mainly for getting acquainted with the Lord. It is a time of prayer and fellowship.

What is Prayer?

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – "Pray without ceasing".

The definition of prayer is not just talking to God, but having a conversation or communion with Him. Comprises of:

1. Speaking
2. Listening – 1 Kings 19:1,2
3. Obeying/Doing

Benefits of Solitude

- Renews strength – Isaiah 30:15, 40:31
- Brings transformation – Genesis 32:24-29
- TIME SPENT ALONE IN GOD’S PRESENCE IS TIME WELL INVESTED!!!

Hymn

O Sabbath rest by Galilee
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with them
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love.

With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of thy call,
As noiseless let thy blessing fall
As fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dew of quietness
Till all our strivings cease.
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered life confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desires
Thy coolness and thy balm.
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire,
Speak through the earthquake, wind & fire
O still small voice of calm

By John Greenleaf Whittier